

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of treating a mammal having a disease of the eye characterized by elevated intraocular pressure comprising administering to the eye of said mammal an amount of a compound that inhibits the interaction between integrin receptor and extracellular matrix sufficient to effect said treatment.

2. The method according to claim 1 wherein said disease is glaucoma.

3. The method according to claim 1 wherein said compound comprises the peptide RGD or derivative thereof or mimetic thereof.

4. The method according to claim 3 wherein said derivative is a protease-resistant derivative.

5. The method according to claim 4 wherein said derivative comprises the D-form of the peptide RGD.

6. The method according to claim 3 wherein the compound comprises the peptide GRGDTP or mimetic thereof or derivative thereof.

7. The method according to claim 1 wherein said compound is administered topically.

8. The method according to claim 1 wherein said compound is administered by injection into the trabecular meshwork/Schlemm's cells or into the anterior chamber of the eye.

9. A method of screening a test compound for its ability to inhibit an interaction between integrin and extracellular matrix comprising:

contacting juxacanalicular or Schlemm's canal cells with an extracellular matrix in the presence and absence of said test compound, and

measuring the level of binding of said cells to said matrix,

wherein a reduction in the level of binding of said cells to said matrix in the presence of said test compound indicates that said test compound is an inhibitor of the interaction of integrin and extracellular matrix.

10. A method of screening a test compound for its ability to reduce intraocular pressure comprising:

contacting Schlemm's canal cells or juxacanalicular cells with a tracer in the presence and absence of said test compound, and

determining the amount of said tracer that

permeates said cells,

wherein an increase the permeability of said tracer in the presence of said test compound indicates that said test compound has the ability to reduce intraocular pressure.

11. A compound identifiable using the method according to claim 9, wherein said compound is other than RGD.

12. A compound identifiable using the method according to claim 10, wherein said compound is other than RGD.